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I have been asked on a number of occasions to indicate material available for colloquial use of Latin in the class-room. Unfortunately there is not at present a very large supply. A book is in preparation in England by Mr. Fred Winter, entitled *Handbook of Colloquial Latin with Classified English-Latin Vocabulary*, which should have appeared before this and may be expected shortly.

Until that appears, however, the most extensive book is a *Guide to Latin Conversation*, by Professor Stephen W. Wilby (John Murphy Co., New York and Baltimore), which costs about 75 cents. It contains classified lists on every conceivable topic, and subjects for discussion and dialogues, much in the form of the ordinary traveller's handbook in the modern languages. The advantage of this book is that it furnishes the modern names for a number of things and ideas which one would search for in vain in the ordinary English-Latin lexica.

Sprechen Sie Lateinisch? is a small German publication giving dialogues on colloquial subjects (see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 1.132).

A great deal of material can be found in Dr. Avellanus's primer, *Palaestra*, published by him at 25 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Four numbers have been issued, at 25 cents each.

Outside of these books I am not aware of any material for extended Latin conversation. For mere oral exercise in the class-room most of the recent manuals contain a fair amount of material; I may mention especially *A First Latin Course* by E. H. Scott and Frank Jones (Blackie and Sons). Grammatical terms and the jargon of grammatical discussion will be found best in such grammars as that by Alvarez, *De Institutione Grammatica* (Woodstock, Md.), written for practical use in the Catholic schools.

Meanwhile that the good work is still going on is evidenced by the following communication recently received by me, to which I invite the attention of all schools in the territory mentioned. It would be very interesting if the challenge given should be accepted and the debate should come off. I sincerely hope it will.

CHALLENGE

As President of The Manual Training High School Classical Club of Brooklyn, N. Y., a society of boys and girls who endeavor, under the guidance of their

teachers, to use Latin as a conversational medium in their meetings, I beg leave to challenge, through the columns of your valuable publication, any High or Preparatory School in the Eastern States to a Latin debate to be held between two teams of three persons each on a topic to be chosen by common agreement.

E. Strittmatter, '10.

N. B.—Communications to be addressed to E. Strittmatter, care Miss M. A. Hall, M. T. High School, 4th St. and 7th Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

G. L.

IMPROVED STANDARDS IN TEACHING LATIN¹

In a delightful little book, *As Others See Us*, Graham Brooks points out the lesson the American people have been obliged to learn from painful experience; that national sensitiveness, self-assertiveness, provincial dogmatism, are of no avail to suppress adverse criticism; that criticism of ourselves constitutes the most valuable groundwork of a rational optimism; and that we have grown in the world's esteem as we have become unsparing in the judgment of our own shortcomings. From Mr. Brooks's array of significant facts, our teachers of Latin might well profit. If the results of our Latin teaching are called into question, let us abstain from recrimination and wordy denial, but in a resolute spirit of self-criticism set forth what we are accomplishing in our Latin, what we ought to accomplish, and how improvement in methods is to be effected.

The claim for the retention of a subject in the curriculum because it *has been* effective is worse than futile; its *actual* serviceability, its distinct contribution to the needs of our present-day intellectual endeavor is the issue. Superficially, we might content ourselves with the reflection that its popularity is attested in the High Schools by the numbers that take up the subject; but size of enrollment is attributable to a multitude of causes; it certainly does not indicate or assure permanent appreciation; in an age like ours of utilitarian tendencies, once that the effectiveness of the teaching of Latin is seriously questioned, there may set in suddenly a popular depreciation, culminating in an overthrow of what was once the very cornerstone of all higher education.

¹ Address delivered at the University Convocation, Albany, October 30, 1909, and before the New York Latin Club, November 20, 1909.

It is a timely subject, then, to consider improved standards of teaching Latin; for public criticism has formulated its objections to the spirit and the method of some of our teaching. For one, I do not deplore this critical attitude; it should redound, if duly appreciated and understood, to the benefit of the subject. A study which is bolstered merely by a tradition is in danger of becoming fossilized.

Quite recently the German gymnasias that had cherished for generations special privileges distinguishing their type of secondary school from other parallel types have admitted the baneful influence of these prerogatives; the *Berechtigungen*, as they are called in German educational literature, had fomented for many years the most bitter discussions, until in 1900 an enlightened public opinion and their own practical insight led the gymnasial party to waive all special legislation in their favor. They welcome the new era; they are prepared to show in *competition* the advantages that accrue from modified prosecution of the Latin work; they have revised the economy of their teaching, have supplemented their unequalled scholarship by a masterful analysis of teaching-method; and have practically demonstrated in their Reform-schulen that even with diminished time allowance, but with skilful correlation of effort, they can achieve as of old the required standards.

Here, it seems to me, we are to find our cue; of little avail will it be to build up a *theory* of what the study of Latin is supposed to effect; improvement in the conduct of the work will be a more convincing argument in its favor than all array of testimony. I shall certainly not attempt to sift or supplement this testimony which is at every teacher's service in the handbooks of Bennett or Dettweiler, in the forcible utterances of men like Lowell, Shorey and Bryce. Improved standards in the teaching of Latin, and the successful establishment of these standards, are the surest means of maintaining the study in its place in the curriculum.

It is surely no ground for the Latin teacher's self-complacency that the teaching of *other* subjects is reputed to be less skilfully conducted than that of Latin; whatever advantage that circumstance may have brought will disappear with the rapid systematization and elaboration of aim in these other subjects; even now the didactic practice of some modern language and science teachers may furnish suggestions of value to our classical teachers.

The improvement in Latin teaching should express itself primarily in unity of aim; the conviction is, I think, growing, that if we except the university stage of scholarly specialization and linguistic research, the entire Latin course from the initial steps through the college course should have one aim, and that a *cultural* one; this aim is to control all our teaching efforts, and the only deviations will be those

in method, which must be modified according to the age and maturity of the student.

To two phases, and two only, of the cultural aim I propose to restrict myself: (1) training in linguistic power; and (2) recognition of the vital relation between the content of Roman life and literature and our own literary and practical development. A Latin course that slights either one of these view-points is incomplete, unsatisfactory.

1. The Anglo-Saxon, more than some of the other great races of the Western world, derives, because of the nature and development of his own vernacular, special gain from the training that the Latin affords; the contrast between the structural features of the two tongues, which may be summarized as formal precision versus formless freedom, can be made a valuable adjunct to the expression of logical thought. We recognize with its obvious limitations the possibilities of our own tongue, as we undertake the process of translation, and the establishment and appreciation of constant cross-relations between the two languages enhances the power of expression.

In the period of secondary school life above all, the expansion of linguistic consciousness as a basis of thought becomes a paramount consideration. The significance of language training at this stage may well rest on Dante's simile in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, "Speech is not otherwise an instrument necessary to our conceptions than is the horse to the soldier".

2. But however appropriate for the earlier stages of the Latin work this formal training proves which creates the power of logical discrimination in and through language forms, we must not neglect the ulterior purpose of Latin study, that it is to be the key to the relationship between the past and the present. The contents of the Latin literature, and the records of its civilization, can be made to contribute somewhat of their significance even to the secondary school pupil; for the college stage they must be in the very center of interest. I omit entirely from consideration the plea of the unapproachable standard of perfection that is often urged in favor of the classic tongues and their literary products, not because I do not share it, but because acceptance of this belief should grow out of the student's own experiences rather than be formulated as dogma.

The two phases of this cultural aim, then, the language training and the historical relationship, adjust themselves to a natural sequence, according to which the practice of our schools and colleges should be determined. If the training in linguistic power which is gained from the accurate study of a highly inflective language promotes logical precision in and through language, then our entire energies must be centered at the outset on firmly se-

curing this accuracy; not an approximation to accuracy which leaves the tool of language uncertain and unreliable, but positive, definite grasp. Vagueness in the recognition of this need has robbed the teaching of elementary Latin of its presumptive value. Our pupils hardly succeed in emancipating themselves at any stage completely from the formal linguistic training; grammar and dictionary dominate the reading of our advanced college classes to whom the idiom should long since have become completely familiar, and who in consequence lose the quickening influence and inspiration that is born of a free survey of the literary document, unhampered by mechanical obstacles.

If college teachers of Latin really aspire to make their subject vital in the large sense of bringing into prominence its bearings upon our modern life, then their share in the necessary change can be easily stated; for they are the intellectual progenitors of successive generations of Latin teachers in the schools. It is their privilege to point out in the discussion of the Latin authors resemblance and discrepancy between ancient and modern political situations, to compare modern and ancient cultural tendencies; to illuminate the differing conceptions in home-life, in public activities, in relations of the individual to the state, in methods of administration, the standards of right and wrong, the influence of religion and of personal religiosity, the interests and processes of trade, the relation of the commonwealth to foreigners, the attitude toward slavery; all these considerations disclose the larger vistas which the future teacher will in his turn seek to make real to his pupils. Of this scope that the study of Latin literature obviously suggests our college courses do not take sufficient cognizance, and it is just here that a brief reference to needful improvement in standards of the college work seems called for. It is not the increasing difficulty or linguistic complexity of the several Latin authors that should determine the succession in which they are offered to the student; it would be invaluable for all of our students, and especially for our future teachers of Latin, if the range of connective association, indicated a moment ago, should be developed in a renewed study of comparatively simple authors from this broader, more philosophic aspect.

As matters stand, our teachers, not to speak of our students, derive little but technical insight into the language from the study of Caesar, Cicero and Vergil, and yet there are untold possibilities in the works of each of these authors which remain a sealed book to teacher and pupil. How many of our secondary Latin teachers, for instance, have so intimate an acquaintance with Holmes's *Conquest of Gaul* that they have realized, what his book reveals, the contribution that Caesar's commentaries

furnish to the ethnology of the Gallic peoples, to the tribal institutions of these primitive communities, their occupations, habits and personal appearance, the stage of their political maturity, the interpretation of their names of persons and localities, the significance of their contact with the opposing civilization of Rome?

Will any one deny that from a familiarity with these and many kindred topics there should spring a degree of interest that at present is *not* associated with our teaching of Caesar? What could an advanced student of political issues, of the conduct of public affairs, of legislative requirements, of parliamentary procedure, of the *technique* of the law not disclose to his hearers by correlating the methods of Cicero's oratory with the modern practice of forensic and legal presentation! And as for Vergil, the true revelation of his poetic power, of his consummate literary skill, which represents in a sense the accumulated poetic tradition of his predecessors, of his appreciation for pictorial and dramatic art, of his disclosure of a consistent philosophic system, all these manifestations of the great poet that made him the model and inspiration to a galaxy of great and greater poets of succeeding ages—these matters that have engaged the attention of many of the eminent European scholars of modern days, and other questions that still await elucidation—are scarcely realized by the great body of our secondary teachers and pupils.

We read Shakspeare, do we not, with our secondary pupils? But did Francis Child hesitate to interpret Shakspeare anew to his advanced students, disclosing the larger human problems, the questions of aesthetics, of structure, to which the boy and girl could not be equal?—I have studied the announcements of Latin courses in all our prominent colleges, and, except where elementary Latin courses are offered to beginners, nowhere have I discovered recognition of this need which seems to me so vital. And even in the Latin programs of our summer sessions, whose constituency is mainly the teacher in active service, eager to supplement the scanty equipment of his own preparatory and college days, I have been able to discover in but one or two cases the frank acceptance of this important principle, the application of scholarly insight to the practical demands of the class room.

From one of these few announcements I quote literally, because it embodies the point I am trying to make: "The aim of the course in Vergil will be to present these two books (1) as they should be known by the teacher, and (2) as they should be taught to a class".

Beyond this, I do not propose to suggest changes in the college teaching of Latin; there is no reason to fear even in our country and age that the necessity and importance of the sciences and their tech-

nological applications will overwhelm and blot out the demand for literary and historical insight; the Humanities still have a host of appreciative adherents, and Latin, properly taught, is not likely to be relegated to obscurity in our colleges.

The college courses of Latin must be freed from the intrusion of the mere mechanism of the language; students who are to seek inspiration from the pages of Horace, Tacitus and Lucretius must come to their task equipped for the larger atmosphere by their previous training.

Can the secondary school bring to the college portals such a type of students? Yes, if schools and teachers are prepared to take a definite stand on one or two general questions of secondary school organization. The fundamental note of the secondary school is opportunity, not compulsion; something highly desirable, but not necessary; we have no right, therefore, to render it ineffective by bringing its privileges down to the level of the unwilling, the incapable. If it is the ulterior aim of such opportunity to develop and foster initiative, intellectual and moral virility, then a process of diluted instruction, the administration of intellectual pabulum as to infants will not accomplish what is to be attained. A weak secondary school, weak in its aims and practice, weak in the qualifications and aspirations of its teachers, is less helpful to a community than a strong primary or grammar school. In the regenerative process that led up to its splendid school system of the nineteenth century, Prussia, as Paulsen points out, forced the abandonment of large numbers of debilitated secondary schools. We shall never make the teaching of any subject in our secondary curriculum valuable, unless we abandon the idea of soft transitions, of sugar-coated invitations to thinking. Vigor (I do not mean rigor) in teaching is a natural stimulus to efficiency, and this it is the prime purpose of the secondary school to generate. Sluggishness, even though it veil itself in the guise of deliberation, is the unpardonable sin of the class room, deadening alike to the individual pupil and the class group. Training to rapidity, to quick recognition, is to-day demanded of every good primary teacher; why should the secondary teacher encourage a relapse? I need only remind you that President Eliot in his essay, *Education for Efficiency*, lays greatest stress on "imparting the habit of quick and concentrated attention".

We all admit that the Latin language can render its real service only if its formal elements be thoroughly mastered; to that end the first year's work should be entrusted to the teachers of the highest capacity. Instead of the prevalent scheme of assigning the initial work to those who have themselves frequently had no Latin beyond the secondary schools, and poor Latin at that, it should be made compulsory that the teacher of fourth year Latin

should also handle a first year class. Such an assignment would be as suggestive and instructive to him as it would be helpful to his pupils.

We cannot forego, that is admitted, the necessity of sharp drill, of insistence on *accuracy* and *rapidity*; we must lay stress on reviews; but didactic ability has discovered various means of making reviews more than a mere reiteration of previous efforts.

If we summarize the needs of our Latin classes in the one terse demand, that we require teachers who *can*, and who will *teach*, then certainly, in the first year's Latin work there should be no room for the mechanical teacher who simply repeats what he has seen others do, possibly at a time when he himself was a pupil. For, in every light, such work is barren. Study the efforts of the past, but *progress* beyond them; that is the first demand in the art and science of teaching.

Of the factors that will add to the value of the first year Latin, there may be enumerated these: with or without the aid of the text-book the teacher should discriminate between forms of common and of rare occurrence, insisting upon the former, and slighting temporarily the latter; grammar, to be effective, should present that which is actually necessary. The vocabulary acquired must be in constant use; it is absurd to introduce words, and then ignore them; without falling into dull and mechanical methods, we may employ a variety of tests in vocabulary; similarity in meaning, or contrast, may form the basis of one system of control, analogy in sound, another.

It is a prevalent error of the elementary books, due, I suppose, to the fancied exigencies of the Latin course, to confuse the beginner in Latin by introducing the fragments of syntactical information before paradigms have become even passably familiar. Nor is it wise to devote *excessive* attention to the matter of quantities; a teacher of sharp auditory powers, himself accurate in his pronunciation, and quick to detect and mend faulty pronunciation, reaches by the unconscious operation of the imitative tendency in his pupils adequate results. It is far more profitable to introduce as soon as possible simple Latin narrative with subject matter drawn from mythology, Roman history, Roman life; and there can be no objection to what is called 'made Latin', if only it be good Latin. If the pupils realized that instead of slavish adherence to a given text-book, the teacher was developing from language material in the pupils' possession subject matter to illustrate principles, and to strengthen previous acquisition of words and forms, if these exercises were carried out at first *orally* with the class, then, in *rapid* work at the blackboard, before any home exercises were imposed, if furthermore, the rule were adopted never to repeat in class blackboard exercises the identical task assigned for

home-work, but to confirm the principle that is under discussion by partial change of vocabulary, we should have substituted a keener interest for the deadly monotony of senseless repetition that is of little benefit to the weak pupil, and irritating to our bright pupils. It is not the difficulty of the subject that depresses our first year pupils, but lack of initiative, of inventiveness, in the instructor.

I contend that the art of teaching can easily secure its greatest triumph in this very field, and make the first year Latin a stirring and delightful exercise; but it rests solely with the teacher, his success depends on his knowledge and his ingenuity. Let him adopt suggestions from other fields of teaching, if they commend themselves by the evidence of their practical value. Why, for instance, have our beginners' books in Latin never applied the 'Anschauungsmethode', the method of furnishing through picture and illustration the material for language expression and thought, a method that has proved of great service in recent modern-language teaching? It would be a simple matter to develop systematically in pictorial forms a number of scenes that would suggest an extensive Latin vocabulary of concrete terms. It would need little more than a series of suggestions from our Latin scholars; of talented draughtsmen to embody them in appropriate illustrations we have no lack.

It is time that our teachers of the Classics abandon the absurd prejudice that still prevails in certain quarters against illustrative material as a legitimate aid to teaching; classes are crippled in their work, if not supplied with appropriate pictures, maps, charts; analogies, as well as differences, become more impressive through the process of visualization.

The preparation of the simple Latin narrative that has just been recommended as a desirable supplement to the study of forms will call for the introduction of much language material that our present primers sedulously avoid; they restrict themselves avowedly to the phraseology of Caesar, the first Latin author into whose work they aim to initiate these first year pupils by the shortest road they know of; the narrowing effect of this limitation is obvious.

And here we touch upon the most serious obstacle to the success of our secondary school Latin work; our present four-year course in Latin arranges a distribution of the work which militates directly against good results; it pretends to accomplish in a first year all the preparatory language work, and to devote the three successive years to the three authors, Caesar, Cicero and Vergil. It does nothing of the kind. With a meager and uncertain attainment in forms, and a still scantier knowledge of syntax, the pupils wrestle throughout the remaining years of the course with the elements of the lan-

guage that should have been acquired before the first attempt to interpret a literary masterpiece is undertaken; and, in the final tests that are to demonstrate their attainments, they are as deficient in these elementary acquirements as they have remained unfamiliar with the spiritual message of the authors they have been supposed to appreciate.

What our teachers should strive for, what college authorities should encourage, is a *deliberate advance*, in which quality, not quantity, is the end to be sought. Our teachers need the specific suggestion from the colleges that far more time should be devoted to preliminary training, two full years, or the greater part of two years; then let us read *two*, not four, books of Caesar, but read them properly, four orations of Cicero, three books of Vergil, varying from year to year in the choice of the books¹. It is a simple matter to bind even disjointed selections together by the illuminating summaries that the teacher gives, and to single out passages of special significance from the view-point of content or of artistic quality; then we may hope to see aroused even in our secondary pupils a width of interest of which the subject is susceptible, but which at present is ignored; the teacher will then have time to dwell upon that relation between past and present that constitutes in my eyes the most vital justification of our Latin teaching. He may be interested in tracing the heritage of ancient modes of conduct, thought and expression as they reveal themselves in the literature of some modern language, or in the actual intellectual and institutional life of our day; he may be peculiarly responsive to the interplay of allusion, quotation, precedent; he may be curious to follow from the classical period downward the tentative advances in the domain of natural science, and may emphasize the growth of insight from error to truth. For such we need three things, time, rational teaching conditions, and suitably trained teachers. The Latin teacher does not stand alone in the demand for a more adequate time-allotment; like every other subject of the secondary school course, Latin needs to be relieved from the unwholesome present tendency toward congested acquisition; if the time is rapidly approaching when we shall secure a five or six-year high school course by the condensation of the elementary curriculum (a possibility now generally recognized and considered advisable for bright pupils), then it is all important that the gain in time shall not tempt us to a superficial scurrying over a larger tract, but shall make for genuine, thorough, inspiring work, a reasonable grasp of the structure of the Latin language, and a first glimpse of its literary and historic significance; it ought to diminish the present glaring

¹ This diminution of prescribed reading does not aim to reduce the quantity of Latin that is to be read; it will afford opportunity for a considerable quantity of *class-reading* at sight.

discrepancy between the printed requirements of our colleges and the attainment offered, and enable our students to meet honestly and safely the *present* demand! How beneficial to the moral tone of school and college the approach to such an ideal would be every serious teacher realizes.

Among the rational teaching conditions which are a second requirement I should designate first a larger view of the *economy* of teaching. Prosecute any method you please, but pursue it definitely through a period of time sufficiently extended to allow its results to appear. Frequent and imperfectly considered changes in system, in text-books, are only partially attributable to the unfortunate frequency of changes in teachers and administrators. No text-book, grammar or reader is so poor but that a competent teacher can utilize its better features, and minimize its shortcomings. Ignorance and corruptness favor constant change. Time economy requires, furthermore, a far more intimate co-ordination of the work from stage to stage; each teacher should take pride in controlling and recording in detail the knowledge his pupils have acquired, and assume the responsibility for definite advance; in perfecting this collaboration between the teachers of successive grades to a degree that we are entirely unconscious of lies much of the success of the German teachers. The teacher should realize that his is the artist's privilege to modulate, to change the rhythm, of his teaching; no prescription of superintendent or school board ought to be necessary to fix for an intelligent teacher the daily allotment of advance in his subject.

Do we not impair this free initiative of the thoughtful teacher by encouraging examinations through nearly three years of the student's secondary school life? We have in the past ridiculed England as being examination-ridden, but our present system of parcelling out fragments of acquired information, so much material furnished per term to the examination-hopper, is sapping the very foundations of rational teaching. When the same test may be undertaken in a given subject by second, third, or fourth year high school pupils, by the child of fifteen, and the young girl or man of eighteen, how can there be a definite standard of attainment, of exposition in and through language? The readers of entrance papers can tell us whether such a test is very far removed from degenerating into a farce. Strange that our examining authorities complicate rather than simplify the test; a searching inquiry into the most advanced requirements in each subject could compel proper organization of the elementary work in the schools. A Latin paper on Vergil and Cicero could easily be prepared that would test proficiency in simpler Latin, in the fundamentals of the language, the schools to stand or fall

by the aggregate of carefully adjusted work. Despite the approval of many secondary teachers whose motives are easily recognized, any ideal view of the function of the high school must repudiate a practice that reduces its teaching to preparation for an examination mill.

But in the last instances our hopes of improvement in the Latin work rest on the knowledge and training of our teachers. To be worth while as a subject of the secondary school, Latin must be taught superlatively well; none should teach it but those who have pursued its study throughout the greater part of their college course; the scholarship we need is not to be of that top-heavy type that has been engaged mainly in the refinements of philological enquiry; it is to embrace the larger perspective that comes to the conscientious student of the Classics from the cultural and historical viewpoint that has been previously advocated for our college courses in Latin. A recent English writer has aptly characterized the type of teacher that the secondary school needs, *the specialist of high general culture*; with the emphasis on the second part of the requirement, that is the type our Latin departments in the secondary schools need above all else. The specialization that narrows, that eyes with suspicion any living interest but one, that would separate and differentiate related topics, that would *denounce*, for instance, the teaching of Roman history by the Latinist because of possible infringement on the sphere of the historian, such specialization is detrimental to our schools. I thoroughly disbelieve in the doctrine that high-class capacity is only attainable by hiding from one's vision all other intellectual interests; I find that the *greatest* university teachers regard the special field they cultivate in its relation to the *larger* questions of life, and frequently obtain stimulus from remote and even unrelated fields of thought and activity.

The secondary teacher of Latin, if he aims to make his subject vital by emphasizing the nexus between past and present, will carry out naturally a valuable type of correlation; he correlates best who has acquired in his own growth the mental habit of correlation.

Teaching and teachers—in the union of greater skill with greater knowledge lies the prospect of establishing improved standards in the teaching of Latin.

JULIUS SACHS.

TEACHERS COLLEGE, Columbia University.

In THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 3.9 reference was made to a paper by Mr. Charles P. Steinmetz, a distinguished electrical engineer, connected with the General Electric Works at Schenectady, New York, and the promise was made that the paper would later